In the Claims:

1. (previously presented) A method for fabricating drip irrigation pipes comprising the following steps:

a) Extruding a plastic pipe (5) through an extruding head (1);

b) Progressively reducing the pipe (5), from the diameter coming out of the extruding head to a final diameter, during which reduction the extruded pipe (5) has a conical length;

c) Inserting a plurality of dripping elements (4) consecutively and keeping pace with the advance of the extruded pipe, through the extruding head (1) and into the extruded pipe (5);

d) Advancing, dragging and/or pushing each dripping element (4) to an area of the pipe (5), whereat each dripping element (4) is brought to contact with a predetermined area of the inner surface of the pipe (5), while having a predetermined speed relative to the speed of the pipe when contact occurs;

e) Cooling the pipe (5) with the dripping elements;

f) Perforating the pipe (5) where the dripping elements (4) are provided;

Characterized in that

g) At least before the contact between the pipe (5) and each dripping element (4) occurs, the dripping element (4) has a higher speed than the pipe (5).

2. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the speed of the dripping elements (4) is

higher than that of the pipe (5), at least immediately before the contact with the pipe (5) occurs and until the dripping element (4) hits the wall of the pipe (5).

3. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the mutual orientation of the inner surface of the pipe (5) and of the facing contact surface of the dripping elements (4) in the area or moment of contact vary at will the transverse component of the force, i.e. the one directed radially towards the pipe (5) when the dripping elements (4) hit the pipe (5).

4. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the higher speed of the dripping elements (4) when they hit the inner surface of the pipe (5) is such as to generate an impact mark in the inner surface of the pipe (5), which is a wedging mark.

5. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the contact between the dripping elements and the inner surface of the pipe occurs in the conical narrowed length of the pipe, the path of the dripping elements (4) converging at least on one side towards the conical wall of the pipe (5).

6. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that after the first contact between the dripping elements (4) and the pipe (5) has occurred, a path length is provided, and compression means for exerting a mutual compression force on the dripping elements (4) and on the pipe

(5).

7. (original) A method as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the compression force is exerted while continuing to advance, drag and/or push the dripping elements (4) with the same force or at the same conditions as those provided before contact with the pipe (5).

8. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that the advancing, dragging and/or pushing force ~~and the conditions, such as extruding, reducing the pipe, inserting drip elements, cooling, perforating, and speeds,~~ after the dripping elements (4) contact~~s~~ the pipe (5) ~~are~~ is similar to the dragging, advancing and/or pushing force ~~and conditions~~ before the dripping elements contact with the pipe (5).

9. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the dripping elements (4) are pushed, whereas the advancing, dragging and/or pushing force of the dripping elements after contact ~~takes place progressively~~ with the pipe is limited by means of elastic dampers.

10. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the dripping elements (4) are joined by a frictional junction force ~~means,~~ to dragging, advancing and/or pushing means, and the advancing, dragging and/or pushing force ~~limitation takes place~~ is limited by ~~exceeding a~~ the frictional junction force during joining of the dripping elements.

11. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a pressure on the pipe (5) against the

dripping elements (4) downstream from the first contact area acts as an external pressure on the pipe (5), and wherein the dripping elements are supported by abutment means (3).

12. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the external pressure is exerted by stationary means, the stationary means at least having surfaces of contact with the pipe (5) which are stationary with respect to the advance motion of the pipe (5), and said means being adjustable with respect to their pressure force.

13. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the external pressure is exerted by means which passively accompany the advance motion of the pipe (5), the means having contact surfaces which may be moved according to the advance of the pipe (5).

14. (previously presented) A method as claim in claim 11, characterized in that the external pressure is exerted by means which are driven by their own motion in a direction corresponding to the advance direction of the pipe (5), the means having at least one surface of contact with the pipe (5) which is driven so that it may be moved in the advance direction of the pipe (5), and exerting at the same time a dragging action on the pipe (5).

15. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the external pressure is exerted substantially perpendicularly to the surface of the pipe (5) and/or of the dripping elements (4).

16. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1,

characterized in that the dripping elements (4) are supported by stationary slide abutments in a compression area that is by slide abutment surfaces which are stationary with respect to the advance motion thereof.

17. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the dripping elements (4) are supported by abutments which passively accompany the advance motion of the dripping elements (4) with the pipe (5).

18. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the dripping elements (4) are supported by abutments which actively accompany the advance motion of the dripping elements (4) with the pipe (5), being themselves driven by their own motion in the same direction as the advance direction of the dripping elements (4) with the pipe.

19. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the driving speed of the external pressure means and/or of the internal abutments for the dripping elements (4) in the same direction as the advance direction of the pipe (5) is adjustable.

20. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the orientation of the dripping elements (4) and of the pipe (5) in the compression length is such that the two parts are parallel at least by their contact surfaces.

21. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the initial contact area between the dripping elements (4) and the pipe (5) and/or the compression

length are provided in the conical narrowed length of the pipe.

22. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the dripping elements (4) are advanced on the feed path (3) continuously and consecutively, the distance between the individual dripping elements (4) on the feed path (3) being greater than the distance between said dripping elements (4) when they are applied to the pipe, to an extent related to the difference between the speeds of the extruded pipe (5) and of the dripping elements (4).

23. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the dripping elements are advanced in a reciprocating stick-slip motion, there being provided a start station wherein each dripping element is kept still or anyway moved at a speed which is lower than or equal to that of the pipe and wherefrom said dripping element (4) is accelerated in the direction of the area of contact with the pipe (5) separately and directly or by successive dripping elements (4), arranged in a line in mutual contact, the acceleration action being exerted on the first dripping element (4) of the line at the rear end thereof with reference to the advance direction of the dripping elements (4).

24. (previously presented) A plant for fabricating drip irrigation pipes characterized in that said plant comprises:

a) Means (1) for extruding a plastic pipe (5), through an extruding head;

b) Calibrating means (6, 7) for progressively reducing the

pipe (5) from the diameter coming out of the extruding head (1) to a final diameter along which reduction, the extruded pipe has a conical length;

c) Feeding means (3) for inserting consecutively a plurality of dripping elements (4), and keeping pace with the advance of the extruded pipe (5), through the extruding head (1) and into the extruded pipe (5);

d) Advancing and/or pushing and/or dragging means (103, 11) for feeding each dripping element (4) to the area of the pipe whereat each dripping element (4) is brought to contact with a predetermined area of the inner surface of the pipe (5), while having a predetermined speed with respect to the speed of the pipe (5) when contact occurs;

e) Means for perforating the pipe where the dripping elements are provided; and

f) Wherein said speed of the dripping elements when feeding the dripping elements into the pipe is higher than the speed of the pipe (5) at least when contact between the pipe and each dripping element occurs.

25. (original) A plant as claimed in claim 24, characterized in 15 that the means for advancing, dragging and/or pushing the dripping elements (4) are driven in such a way as to cause an impact of the dripping elements against the pipe which is meant to impress a mark in the contact area of the inner surface of the pipe (5).

26. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 24,

characterized in that the advancing and/or pushing and/or dragging means further comprises means (3) for guiding the dripping elements (4), consisting of a stationary slide surface.

27. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 26, characterized in that the means (3, 103) for guiding the dripping elements (4) comprises surfaces which are passively moved together with said dripping elements (4) or of rolling surfaces.

28. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 27, characterized in that the guide means (3, 10) act, at the same time, as means for dragging, advancing and/or pushing the dripping elements (4), being provided with surfaces for bearing the dripping elements (4), which are driven by a motion having the same direction as the advance direction of said dripping elements (4) inside the pipe (5).

29. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 27, characterized in that the dragging, advancing and/or pushing means exert their action for a predetermined length even after the first contact between the dripping elements (4) and the pipe (5) has occurred, the means for guiding them (3, 103) extending also beyond the area of first contact with the pipe (5).

30. (currently amended) A plant as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that, in the area situated downstream from the area of first contact between the dripping elements (4) and the pipe (5), the dragging, advancing and/or pushing means are driven in the same way as in the area situated upstream from the area of first contact between the dripping elements (4) and the pipe (5),

such that the dripping elements (4) are given a speed which is higher than that of the pipe (5), ~~whereas there are provided means for~~ disengaging said dragging, advancing and/or pushing means from their respective dripping elements (4), in the area situated downstream from the area of first contact with the pipe (5), when a predetermined pressure thereof against the pipe (5) is attained, due to the different advance speeds.

31. (currently amended) A plant as claimed in claim 30, characterized in that the ~~disengagement~~ disengaging is obtained by an elastic means for damping the force for dragging, advancing and/or pushing the dripping elements (4) or due to friction means.

32. (original) A plant as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that, in the area situated downstream from the first contact between the dripping elements (4) and the pipe (5) there are provided presser means (11, 11', 11"), outside the pipe (5), which are stressed by an adjustable compression force having at least one component perpendicular to the wall of the pipe (5).

33. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 32, characterized in that the presser means consist of a stationary presser means (11), i.e. a means at least having surfaces of contact with the pipe (5) which are stationary with respect to the advance motion of the pipe (5).

34. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 32, characterized in that the presser means have a contact surface which passively accompanies the advance motion of the pipe (5),

or a surface which is meant to roll thereon.

35. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 32, characterized in that the presser means have one surface of contact with the pipe (5) which is driven by its own motion in the advance direction of the pipe (5), and which exerts a pushing and/or dragging action on the pipe (5) in the advance direction.

36. (original) A plant as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that at least in the area of first contact between the dripping elements (4) and the inner surface of the pipe (5), the profile of the pipe (5) and the path of the dripping elements converge.

37. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that in the area wherein the dripping elements (4) are compressed against the pipe (5), downstream from the area of first contact between said two parts, the profile of the pipe (5), i.e. of its wall, and the path of the dripping elements (4) are parallel or slightly convergent.

38. (original) A plant as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that the first contact area is provided downstream from a first wall having the function to narrow the pipe (5) from the diameter coming out of the extruder to a first smaller diameter, and upstream from a succeeding intermediate or final calibrator for further narrowing the pipe (5) to a further intermediate smaller diameter or to the final smaller diameter.

39. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 38, characterized in that the first contact area and/or the area

wherein the dripping elements (4) with the pipe (5) are compressed are provided in the same conical length of the pipe (5).

40. (previously presented) A plant as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that the means for advancing, dragging or pushing the dripping elements (4) are of the continuous or reciprocating type.